



GRAND TRAVERSE OF THE INDIAN HIMALAYA

TOUR INFORMATION

Activity: Trekking & Walking

Tour Duration: 15 Days

Min Age For Trips: 18+



INCLUSIONS

- 6 Nights Hotel, 9 Nights Camping
- 15 Breakfasts, 7 Lunches, 9 Dinners
- Fully Supported Trekking
- Flight Delhi To Leh Return

This information should answer some of your questions about the trip and give you a better idea of what we do day-to-day. It doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Spectacular flight over the Himalaya from Delhi to Leh with panoramic views of glaciers and peaks of the Indian Himalaya.**
- **Visit iconic monasteries including Thiksey & Hemis.**
- **Cross multiple high altitude passes including Khardung La.**
- **Marvel at stunning snow capped Himalayan landscapes.**
- **Spot rare wildlife such as black necked cranes, Brahminy ducks, wild asses kiang, marmots, pikas, wolves, and Tibetan antelope.**
- **Explore the nomadic village of Korzok and the azure waters of Tso Moriri Lake.**
- **Experience the ultimate Himalayan traverse combining culture, nature, and adventure.**

The trek is led by **Valerie Parkinson**. Valerie has been leading treks and expeditions in the Himalaya for over 40 years and her knowledge of the culture, religion, people and mountains is second to none. In 2008 Valerie became the first British woman to summit Manaslu (8163m) without the use of supplementary oxygen. She spends every summer (and most winters) guiding in Ladakh.

INDIA AND LADAKH

High Places began in India. 1987 saw our very first trip set off to trek in the Garhwal Himalayas in north India. We have gradually widened our destinations and now also go to Ladakh, Sikkim and to Kerala. If you are looking for an authentic, energetic yet sensitive holiday in India we are the specialists. Moreover we continue to hold India in great respect and have a deep regard for the land and its people. To travel with High Places here will disprove many of the myths you might hold and leave you with a sense of wonder and incredulity. There is a life-force in India, which we may already have lost in the West. Go and see for yourself.

The mountain kingdom of Ladakh is in the far north of India and is a remote region of wild arid valleys, rocky gorges and ridges leading to peaks over 6000m. It lies in the rain shadow north of the Himalayan divide and so avoids the influence of the monsoon. It is subject to extremes in temperature, with hot summers and very cold winters. Little wonder that the Ladakhis are a hardy and self-sufficient people. Through ingenious irrigation systems, the villages in summer are oases of green barley fields; isolated splashes of colour in the desert landscape. Prayer flags, chortens, and mani walls of carved prayer stones are a constant reminder that Buddhism is a way of life, with symbols and spirits from pre Buddhist times incorporated into the present day faith.

OVERVIEW

Ladakh, often called the Land of High Passes, is located in the Indian Himalayas. It is known for its beautiful landscapes, rich culture, and peaceful atmosphere. Ladakh is a Union Territory of India and one of the last places where Tibetan Buddhism is still widely practiced. It's dramatic scenery with windy valleys, sharp mountain ridges, old monasteries built on cliffs and is one of the best adventure travel destinations on earth. The Grand Traverse of the Indian Himalaya is a high-altitude trekking adventure through the remote and stunning landscapes of Ladakh and the Changthang Plateau. This journey combines gradual acclimatization, cultural experiences, and a rewarding trek across High Mountain passes, beautiful lakes, and traditional nomadic regions.

ITINERARY

This itinerary is flexible and should be seen as a guide only. Local conditions, weather or fitness could lead to changes in our daily plans. All times and distances are approximate. **(B, L, D)** refers to meals included in the trip cost, i.e. **Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner**.

Day 1: Arrival in Delhi

Upon arrival in Delhi, you will be met and escorted to your hotel. The remainder of the day is available for rest following your journey or for independent exploration of the city.

Accommodation: Hotel

Meals: Breakfast

Day 2: Fly Delhi to Leh 3500m

Drive to the airport for an early flight over the Himalaya to Leh. If weather permits, arrive in Leh early. Spend the day relaxing and acclimatizing (11,485ft/3,500m). We take a rest in the morning and in the afternoon there will be a short orientation walk around Leh and its bazaars.

Accommodation: Hotel

Meals: Breakfast

Day 3: In Leh

Today we have an acclimatization walk around the Leh Valley, allowing your body to adjust to the high altitude. Visit Sankar monastery, followed by the peaceful Shanti Stupa, offering breathtaking panoramic views of Leh town and the surrounding mountains. Continue to the old Royal Palace, a historic nine-storey structure overlooking the city, and conclude the walk with a visit to Tsemo Gompa, perched atop a hill with sweeping views of the Indus Valley.

Accommodation: Hotel

Meals: Breakfast



DAY 4: Drive up to the Khardung La (5380m) for views of Stok Kangri. Return to Leh (3524m)

Drive up to the Khardung La (5380 m) one of the world's highest motorable road passes. This high pass in the mountains to the north of Leh leads into the Nubra Valley, which has until recently been closed to foreign visitors. The 2000 m climb to the pass provides panoramic views of the Zaskar Range beyond the Indus Valley, and towards the Karakoram of Pakistan.

Accommodation: Hotel

Meals: Breakfast

Distance: 75 km / 4 hrs drive

DAY 5: Drive to Rumtse & afternoon acclimatization walk (4218 m)

After breakfast, depart from Leh and drive towards Rumtse, a scenic journey of about 2.5 hours through the stark and beautiful landscapes of Ladakh. En route, visit the magnificent Shey palace, known for its giant copper-gilt statue of Shakyamuni Buddha, followed by the iconic Thiksey monastery, often compared to the Potala Palace for its impressive hilltop architecture and sweeping views of the Indus Valley. Continue to Rumtse, a traditional village and starting point for high-altitude treks.

Accommodation: Tents

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner

Distance: 77 km / 2-3 hrs drive

**DAY 6: Trekking through riverside pastures to the base of the Kyamar La (4615m)**

Start your first day trek up the Kyamar Valley. We cross the river a couple of times but the walking today is fairly gentle as we gain height slowly. Our campsite is on a green grassy area – look out for marmots around the camp. The energetic can take an extra hike up a hill behind our campsite. This is an area much used by nomadic shepherds and we will get used to seeing their tented camps, surrounded by herds of sheep.

Accommodation: Tents

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Trek Distance: 12 km / 4-5 hrs

Ascent: ↑ 350m

Descent: ↓ 50m

DAY 7: Trek across the Kyamar La (5130m) and the Mandalchan La (5216m) to Tisaling (5046m)

The day starts out with a gradual but quite tough climb to the Kyamar La (5130 m), which takes a little over 2 hours from camp.

On the way we are likely to see hares, marmots and picas, as well as the elusive Himalayan blue sheep. There are spectacular views westwards to the Zaskar range of mountains and also, looking north and east, wide-ranging panoramas across the high plateau of the Chang Tang. We descend on grassy slopes for an hour to Tiri Doksa, a temporary shepherding settlement and then continue to a stream where we take lunch. After lunch, a trek of an hour or so takes us across the Mandalchan La (5216m). We reach our camp at Tisaling (5046m).

Accommodation: Tents

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Trek Distance: 14 km / 7-8 hrs

Ascent: ↑ 800m

Descent: ↓ 350m

DAY 8: Trek across the Thasang La (5300m) to Phongponagu on the shores of Tso Kar Lake (4579m)

We start the day with climb up to the Thasang La (5300m). Excellent views of the lake of Tso Kar (White Lake) below us. We descend steadily and walk across level plains to Phongponagu (4579m) close to the salt lake of Tso Kar. There should be time in the afternoon to explore the lake shore, with a good chance to see kyang (wild ass), marmots and great birdlife, such as bar-headed geese and Brahminy ducks on the lake. Tso Kar is a salt water lake and the nomads take this salt across to Tibet for trade.

Accommodation: Tents

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Trek Distance: 15 km / 7-8 hrs

Ascent: ↑ 300m

Decent: ↓ 750m

DAY 9: Trek along the lake shore and across the Chang Tang plains to Nuruchan (4694m)

Today's trek follows a well-defined trail along the shore of the lake and then across the open and quite arid Chang Tang plains to a beautiful campsite in the pastures of Nuruchan (4694m). There are usually several nomad camps in this area, with scattered tents, shepherds and their dogs and herds of livestock.

Accommodation: Tents

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Trek Distance: 16 km / 5-6 hrs

Ascent: ↑ 150m

Decent: ↓ 50m



DAY 10: Trek across the Nuruchan La (4750m) to Rachungkaru (4952m)

Continue your trek, we cross a stream and pass close to a mani wall, sculpted by the Chang Tang herders. We then hike up to the Nuruchan La (4750m), before descending easily to cross another stream and another low pass. In this area, the nomadic herders that we meet are likely to be Tibetan, having been displaced here from the western part of that cross-border territory. We camp at Rachungkaru (4952m) amongst grazing yaks, sheep and pashmina goats. Afternoon at leisure.

Accommodation: Tents

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Trek Distance: 10 km / 4-5 hrs

Ascent: ↑ 350m

Decent: ↓ 120m

DAY 11: Trek across the Kyamaru La (5400m) and the Gyabarma La (5300m) to Gyabarma (5171m)

Today we cross 2 passes of above 5000 metres, it is a fairly long day . It takes us around 2 hours to reach the first of these, the Kyamaru La (5400m), where the views extend across a high-level landscape to numerous snow-capped peaks. After a short descent, we climb again to cross the Gyabarma La (5300m), beyond which we descend, cross a stream and reach our camping place in the pastures at Gyabarma (5171m). A wild and remote location.

Accommodation: Tents

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Trek Distance: 16 km / 8-9 hrs

Ascent: ↑ 700m

Decent: ↓ 450m

DAY 12: Trek across Yalung Naula Pass (5400m) with views of Tso Moriri Lake and descend to Korzok Dok (4632m)

Today we will enjoy sensational views of the stunning lake of Tso Moriri, as we reach the top of the Yalung Naula Pass (5400m). Some 20 km long and surrounded by high, snow-capped peaks, Tso Moriri is one of the most beautiful lakes imaginable. The approach to the pass is straight forward, but quite long. We descend to Korzok Dok (4632m) on a zig zag path.

Accommodation: Tents

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Trek Distance: 18 km / 6-7 hrs

Ascent: ↑ 300m

Decent: ↓ 800m



DAY 13: Drive from Korzok to Leh

After breakfast, depart from Korzok, bidding farewell to the serene surroundings of Tso Moriri Lake. Drive back to Leh, passing through vast high-altitude plains, remote villages, and dramatic mountain landscapes that define the Changthang region. Enjoy the scenic journey with photo stops along the way. Arrive in Leh in the late afternoon and check in to your hotel for that welcome hot shower.

Accommodation: Hotel

Meals: Breakfast

Distance: 230 km / 6-7hrs

DAY 14: Fly from Leh to Delhi

A memorable flight across the Himalayas and a dramatic end to our adventures in Ladakh.

(Please note – there is not much time to explore Leh at the end of the trip. If you would like additional days in Ladakh please let us know and we can arrange your flight and accommodation).

Accommodation: Hotel

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 15: Depart Delhi

Depart Delhi or extend your trip. Optional extensions include visiting the Taj Mahal or exploring more of Delhi. International flights should ideally depart after 14:00 for possible flight delays from Leh.

Meals: Breakfast

INCLUDES

- All airport transfers and ground transportation as per the itinerary
- Domestic flights: Delhi – Leh – Delhi
- Hotel accommodation in Delhi and Leh on a twin-sharing basis with breakfast
- Fully supported trek with camp accommodation throughout the trekking days
- All meals during the trek (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)
- Experienced English-speaking trekking guide
- Support staff including cooks, helpers, and porters/pack animals as required
- All necessary camping equipment (tents, kitchen tent, dining tent, toilet tent, sleeping mats)
- Inner Line Permits and trekking permits for Ladakh and Changthang regions
- Entrance fees for monasteries and sightseeing as per itinerary
- First-aid kit and oxygen cylinder carried by the support team
- Comprehensive logistics and on-ground coordination throughout the journey

EXCLUDES

- International flights to Delhi
- India Visa
- Personal travel insurance
- Extra meals in Delhi and Leh, as detailed in the itinerary
- Optional sightseeing tours in Delhi
- Tipping for drivers/hotel staff/guides/trek support team/leader
- Personal expenses such as laundry, drinks etc
- Hire of sleeping bag and down jacket in Leh
- Any expenses caused by reasons beyond our control such as roadblocks, weather conditions, natural calamities, flight cancellations and rescheduling, delays etc

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

GETTING THERE

The trip starts and ends in Delhi. Transfers are provided on arrival from Delhi airport to the hotel in Delhi and on departure from the hotel in Delhi to the airport. Please let us know your flight details so we can pass this on to our local partner.

ACCOMMODATION

- 2 nights in a 3-star hotel in Delhi on bed and breakfast. We usually use the Regent Grand Hotel.
- 4 nights in the Glacier View Hotel in Leh on bed and breakfast.
- 8 nights are spent camping. Camping is full service. Tents and foam mattress are provided. We have a full camp crew of guide, cook and camp assistants who will do all the camping chores. Ponies will carry the loads and ponymen will load and unload the ponies.
- All accommodation is on a twin share basis. If you would like a single room and tent, single supplement is available.
- If you would like extra nights in the hotel in Delhi at the start or end of the trip, or you would like to fly to Leh early or have extra time in Ladakh, please contact us for details

VACCINATIONS: INDIA

- There are no required vaccinations. However, you may want to consider vaccinations for tetanus, hepatitis A, typhoid, cholera, hepatitis B, Japanese encephalitis, rabies and tuberculosis. The risk of malaria is slight, but you may wish to consult your doctor or travel clinic for further advice.
- Additionally, dengue, a viral disease spread by mosquitoes, is a known risk in India. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available, so we strongly recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites.
- In regions over approximately 6,560ft (2,000m), there is little risk of mosquito-borne diseases. For trips above 9,840ft (3,000m), there is a risk of being affected by acute mountain sickness. Our itineraries are designed to enable everyone to acclimatise to these altitudes, but you should be aware that it is still possible for you to be affected.
- For more information the website of the National Travel Network and Centre has very good information. www.travelhealthpro.org.uk

CLIMATE

During July and August, the temperature in Delhi will be hot (35°C) and humid. In Ladakh the summer is usually hot and dry. Temperatures can get to 25°C-30°C, with nighttime down to about 10°C. At our highest camps it will be cooler and nights can be as low as minus 5°C at base camp. Summit night will be cold as we start around 1am. At high altitude, the sun has a very strong effect. Ladakh is not normally affected by monsoon, and we can usually expect stable weather. However, mountains do generate their own weather systems, and some rain or snowfall cannot be ruled out.

DIFFICULTY RATING

This is a challenging trek at high altitude. You need a decent level of fitness and previous experience of trekking over 4000m would be useful. We recommend you do as much walking as possible before the trek and wear the boots you will be hiking in, so they are worn in and comfortable.

EATING AND DRINKING

India is famous for food and there is ample chance to try various Ladakhi favourites, which are often influenced by the cuisines of Tibet and China thanks to the passing Silk Road traders of yesteryear. Momos (filled dumplings) and yaks cheese are popular. Other favourites (but there are plenty more) are: thukpa, a clear vegetable soup with noodles and mutton, chicken or yak meat; tingmo (pronounced tee-mo), a steamed bread eaten with dal; and chutagi, a thick soup of local vegetables with bow tie-shaped pieces of dough cooked in broth (also served with meat).

Allow about £25/30 per day for lunch and dinner, where it is not included. You can eat out very cheaply in India, but if you go to the more expensive restaurants most of the time, you will spend more than the suggested amount. Please note, service in restaurants can be quite slow. Tea and soft drinks are very cheap. A large bottle of beer is approximately 300 rupees.

While camping, staff bring a hot drink (tea & coffee) to your tent each morning. When you reach camp in the afternoon, tea/coffee/hot chocolate and cake/biscuits are served. At breakfast, dinner and in the afternoons, there is a choice of hot drinks. Breakfast typically includes cereal, toast and jam, eggs and porridge. Lunch on trek is usually served as a picnic en route (except on shorter days when it is in camp). Lunch and dinner typically include soup to start, followed by a variety of hot dishes (both local and Western) such as potatoes, vegetables, curry, pasta, rice, dahl and paneer (cottage cheese). At dinner, a dessert such as tinned fruit and custard, fritters or cake is also served.

Dietary requirements can be catered for – please advise in advance.

MONEY AND TIPPING

The currency in India is the Indian Rupee (INR). You can change money in Delhi and Leh. There are ATM machines in Delhi and in Leh, but please note that often they do not work, or they are empty. We advise you to bring at least half the money you will need in cash (if not all). You will need money for lunches and dinners in Delhi and Leh, a small amount for entry fees in Leh, incidentals such as drinks and snacks plus tipping. We suggest that you allow £150 for tipping for the whole trip. Your leader will advise on tipping for Delhi and Leh and the trek. All tipping (including the leader) is of course at your discretion.

ALTITUDE

Above 3000m, the air is thinner, the pressure is lower and there is less oxygen available in the atmosphere. Acclimatisation is the process by which the body adapts to these conditions. The key to acclimatisation is a good itinerary with a gradual initial height gain, walking at a slow and steady pace, and increasing fluid intake – drinking at least 4 litres a day is advisable above 3000m.

TRANSPORT

We fly from Delhi to Leh and use buses, jeeps or taxis for the sightseeing round Leh and the journey from Leh to the start of the trek.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

We have an excellent record of staying fit and well in India. The key seems to be our enthusiasm for Indian vegetarian food, (most of India is vegetarian), and care with water, peeling fruit, avoiding salads etc.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We recommend you buy travel insurance as soon as you book. Please check it covers you to the maximum altitude the trip goes to (5400m). We recommend you carry a copy (paper or on your phone) of the policy and make sure you have the 24hr medical emergency telephone numbers. Your leader will need to check your insurance details.

INDIAN VISAS

You will need an Indian visa. CLIENTS NEED TO APPLY FOR NORMAL TOURIST VISA (E VISA)

You can apply within 30 days of travel for (30 days visa) AND 120 days prior for (365 days visa)

You will need to ensure you have a valid passport to travel to India and the best way to apply is using the official Indian Government website link here

<https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>



What do I need to bring?

- You will need one piece of luggage which should be a soft and sturdy duffel bag which weighs a maximum of 15kg for the ponies to carry throughout the trek.
- You will carry your own day pack on trek with waterproofs, water, snacks etc – a 35/50- litre day pack is suggested for this trip.
- On the flights to and from Leh there is a baggage limit of 15kg for hold baggage and an additional 7kg for cabin baggage.
- The hotels in both Delhi and Leh will store luggage free of charge.
- Some items can be hired in Leh (see below).

The following items are essential and we recommend you bring them

- Travel insurance policy (including the details of the 24 hour medical emergency telephone number)
- Daypack 30 to 50 litres
- Sleeping bag (comfort rated -5°C)
- Hiking boots – worn in and waterproof with ankle support
- Trainers/sandals for river crossings and camp use
- Walking socks – thin and thicker
- Trekking trousers and shorts/skirt
- Long-sleeved base layers (merino wool is great)
- Leggings
- Shirts or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket and trousers
- Warm jacket (at least 3 season)
- Sunhat, sunglasses and sunscreen
- Gloves – thin and good thicker
- Warm hat
- Head torch and spare batteries
- Water bottles 1 litre (x 2)
- Water purification - tablets/liquid/steri-pen device
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Travel towel (campsites are always by a source of water/river)
- Personal First Aid Kit
- Power bank, plug adaptor, chargers
- Toilet paper for the trek
- Snacks

You can hire the following in Leh (paid locally in rupees INR)

- 4 season sleeping bag INR 3,300
- 4 season down jacket INR 3,300
- Trekking pole(s) INR 1,100

If you need to hire gear, please let us know in advance.

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

If you need any pre or post trip accommodation in Delhi or Leh we can book extra hotel nights. There is plenty to see and do in Delhi and Leh. We can change the dates of your flight to and from Leh if you wish to arrive early or stay longer.

We can arrange a trip to Agra to see the Taj Mahal or a longer trip visiting Jaipur and Agra.

Please ask us for details of itineraries and costs